

Technical Notes for 2011 Child Deaths in North Carolina

In 2011, the child death rate was practically the same as the child rate in 2010, 57.4 vs. 57.5 per 100,000 children ages 0-17, respectively. During the past twenty years, 1992-2011, the rate has declined a total of 43 percent.

The data presented in the report are derived from death certificates filed with the North Carolina Vital Records office for children ages 0 through 17 who died in 2011. Any changes to these records which occur after the mortality files have been closed will not be reflected in the report. Also it is inappropriate to compare the statistics presented in this report with statistics presented by the Office Chief of Medical Examiner (OCME) because file closure and coding practices are different.

I. Child Deaths by Cause

Rounding Considerations

The percentages presented are rounded to the nearest whole number and may not sum to the total due to rounding.

Unintentional Injuries Subcategories

Note that the total number of unintentional injuries is divided into seven subcategories: *motor vehicle injuries, bicycle injuries, injuries caused by fire, drowning, falls, poisoning and other unintentional injuries*. These subcategory numbers are not included in the column total since they were already accounted for in the broad Unintentional Injuries category. The subcategories are kept across all four columns: Average Annual Number 2007-2011, Number in 2010, Number in 2011, and Percent Change. The *Other unintentional injuries subcategory* contains causes of death due to "Other accidental threats to breathing" (48.3%), "Exposure to inanimate mechanical forces" (22.4%), "Exposure to forces of nature" (8.6%), "Water transport accidents" (5.2%), "Exposure to unspecified factor" (5.2%), "Pedestrian injured in transport accident" (3.0%), "Exposure to animate mechanical forces" (3.4%), and "Sequelae of other accidents" and "Exposure to unspecified electric current" (3.4%).

All Other Causes of Death Category

This sub-grouping includes deaths which cannot be categorized into any of the major cause of death categories. Within this category, the majority of deaths were attributed to "Ill-defined and unknown causes of mortality" (81.3%), "General Symptoms and signs" (5.5%), and "Hanging, strangulation and suffocation, undetermined intent" (4.4%).

Interpreting Percent Change

The Percent Change column is a comparison of the 2011 deaths to the 2010 deaths. Please note that when a category contains a small number of deaths, such as falls, or bicycle injuries, a change of just one death produces a relatively large percent change.

Notes on Cause of Death Categories

Since 1999, causes of death have been under the ICD-10 (International Classification of Diseases-Tenth Revision) coding system. Coding for 1998 and earlier years were done under the ICD-9 CM (International Classification of Diseases-Ninth Revision) coding system. To maintain

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consistent reporting, *the standard cause-of-death vocabulary* is kept consistent with the ICD-9 code system. However, the ICD-10 codes differ from those under ICD-9 CM, because of changes in coding rules, changes in category names and ICD-based cause of death tabulation lists. *Consequently, caution should be exercised in comparing cause-specific deaths across years.* Therefore, a change in the rates for a specific cause of death from 1988 to 2011 may reflect changes in the coding system rather than epidemiological causes.

II. Child Deaths by Age

Please note that age categories are in unequal increments. Therefore, use caution when making comparisons across groups.

The Infant category includes all children who die within 365 days of their date of birth.

III. North Carolina Population Data

When the 2000 census results were released, the State Demographer made necessary changes in the estimated population to reflect approximate population for the previous nine years. These changes revealed that the North Carolina population had been underestimated by 3 to 4 percent over the ten year period. The child death rates for 1999 and earlier, shown in the graph have been recalculated using “smoothed” population estimates. With these changes, rates have decreased slightly.

Prior annual Child Death Reports utilized population estimates generated by the North Carolina State Demographer’s Office. From 2010 on, the North Carolina Child Death Report utilizes population figures derived from the National Center for Health Statistics. The [NCHS Bridged estimates](#) reflect Census data collected as of April 1, of each year for resident population of the United States, by county, single-year of age (0, 1, 2,..., 85 years and over), bridged (single) race, Hispanic origin, and sex. These estimates are prepared under a collaborative arrangement with the U.S. Census Bureau. Keep in mind that different population estimates can produce slight variations in rates. Due to the changes in population denominators used for the 2010 report and on, caution should be taken in comparing 2010 and on rates with rates reported in prior years.